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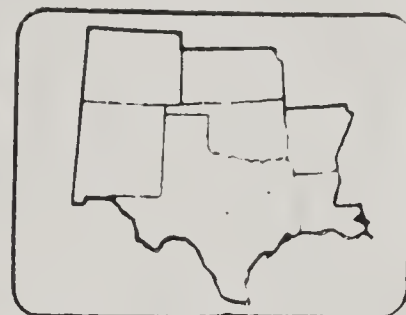
EST REGIONAL INFORMATION OFFICE

FOOD SAFETY AND QUALITY SERVICE

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USDA Defers Action On Sorbate Cure For Bacon With Reduced Nitrite

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) has deferred final action on a proposal to use potassium sorbate as a partial replacement for nitrite in curing bacon, pending the results of further safety tests now underway.

Last May, USDA's Food Safety and Quality Service (FSQS) published a proposal to reduce the amount of nitrite used in curing bacon from the current 120 parts per million (ppm) to 40 ppm. Since the reduced nitrites might lessen the protection against botulism, additional safety would be provided by adding 0.26 percent potassium sorbate by weight of the bacon to the cure.

Under last year's proposal, USDA was to take final action within a year, based on the outcome of tests on the new cure ingredient. With the tests still underway, however, USDA has postponed its decision on the reduced nitrite cure.

The notice was published in the May 15 Federal Register.

